

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24864

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, ELAB, TH

SUBJECT: RTG DISPERSES STRIKING SECURITY GUARDS

REF: BANGKOK 24722

SUMMARY: RTG ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 25 THAT THE SPLINTER GROUP, LEFT OVER FROM THE THAI SECURITY GUARD (TSG) STRIKE OF JULY 1975 AND ENCAMPED IN FRONT OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE FOR THE PAST FOUR MONTHS, WOULD BE DISPERSED. STATEMENT FROM PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE CHARGED GUARDS WITH SLANDERING THE GOVERNMENT, INCITING OTHER WORKERS TO STRIKE, AND ACCUSING THAILAND OF HAVING PROVOKED MEKONG RIVER INCIDENT WITH LAOS. MOST OF THE GUARDS AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE BUSSED TO CHONBURI PROVINCIAL POLICE TRAINING AREA FOR QUESTIONING AND THEN RELEASED. END SUMMARY.

1. POLICE DEPARTMENT, ALONG WITH BORDER PATROL POLICE AND CRIME SUPPRESSION UNITS, ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT, CONDUCTED A SURPRISE RAID ON THE TSG ENCAMPMENT
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IN FRONT OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 25.

MOST OF THE GUARDS AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE ROUNDED UP AND BUSSED TO THE CHONBURI PROVINCIAL POLICE TRAINING AREA WHERE THEY WERE QUESTIONED AND THEN RELEASED. SOME GUARDS WERE REPORTEDLY SENT BY BUS TO THEIR HOMES PRIMARILY IN THE NORTHEAST. POLICE OFFICIALS ARE REPORTED IN NOVEMBER 25 ISSUE OF BANGKOK WORLD AS SAYING THAT LEGAL ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THOSE GUARDS WHO LED OTHERS TO VIOLATE THE LAW. SEVERAL OF THE RING LEADERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. OTHER GUARDS HAVE CLAIMED THEY WERE FORCED TO JOIN THE PROTEST AND THAT THEIR ID CARDS HAD BEEN CONFISCATED BY GUARD LEADERS. ACCORDING TO THE NATION NOVEMBER 26, A NATIONWIDE SEARCH IS ON FOR PROTEST LEADER HAO SRITHORN WHO WAS NOT AT THE ENCAMPMENT WHEN THE RAID WAS CONDUCTED.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE STATED NOVEMBER 25 THAT THE DISPERSAL ACTION WAS TAKEN WHEN IT WAS DETERMINED THAT GUARD'S MOTIVATION WAS TO "SUBVERT NATIONAL STABILITY AND ECONOMY" RATHER THAN TO SEEK COMPENSATION AND SECURITY ALLOWANCES AS GUARDS HAD CLAIMED. SPECIFICALLY, GUARDS WERE CHARGED WITH INCITING WORKERS AT THE HARAX GARMENT FACTORY IN SAMUT SAKHON PROVINCE AND WITH USING LOUDSPEAKERS TO ACCUSE THE RTG OF HARBORING AND CARRYING OUT AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS AGAINST LAOS.

3. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT IN A NOVEMBER 25 PRESS CONFERENCE, WHEN ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY WAY TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE GUARDS, REPLIED, "THERE IS NO WAY BY WHICH AN AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED. IF THEY DO NOT SHOUT DEMANDS, THEY SIT THERE AND ABUSE THE GOVERNMENT. AFTER THE DEMANDS THEY MADE ORIGINALLY WERE GRANTED, THEY SET UP A NEW COMMITTEE AND MADE NEW DEMANDS. WHERE COULD THE MONEY BE FOUND TO GIVE THEM? IF THESE NEW DEMANDS WERE MET, NEARLY 90 MILLION BAHT WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND TO GIVE THEM". KHUKRIT WENT ON TO SAY, "THIS REALLY DOES NOT CONCERN THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL. IT IS AN ISSUE BETWEEN THESE SECURITY GUARDS AND THE AMERICAN EMBASSY AND SUPREME
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COMMAND FORWARD....".

4. IN ARTICLE ON PAGE 3 OF NOVEMBER 26 ISSUE OF THE NATION, A POLICEMAN IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT ACTION WAS TAKEN AGAINST THE GUARDS BECAUSE IT WAS FEARED THEY WERE ABOUT TO REVEAL THE DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES AT AIRBASES AND ENDANGER NATIONAL SECURITY. PREVIOUS REPORTS (REFTEL) INDICATED THE GUARDS

INTENDED, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NSCT, TO PUBLICIZE THE LOCATIONS OF US MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THAILAND.

5. COMMENT: THE BELATED SHOW OF FORCE BY THE RTG COMES AFTER FOUR LONG MONTHS OF PUTTING UP WITH THE GUARDS' TENT CITY OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH THE PRIME MINISTER IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE INDICATED THAT GUARDS HAD BEEN A MONUMENTAL NUISANCE, THE RTG, IN ITS OFFICIAL STATEMENT JUSTIFYING THE ACTION, WRAPPED ITSELF SECURELY IN THE FLAG, CHARGING THE GUARDS WITH THREATENING NATIONAL SECURITY. ALTHOUGH GUARDS MAY ATTEMPT TO REGROUP, PERHAPS WITH HELP FROM THE NSCT, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE DISPERSAL ACTION HAS BROKEN THE BACK OF THIS PROLONGED PROTEST. WHITEHOUSE

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